

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-09

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 A-01 OPR-02 OC-05 CCO-00 SAB-01

SAJ-01 SAM-01 SCA-01 AID-05 SCCT-01 SY-05 USSS-00

IO-10 OMB-01 INRE-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00 PM-03

H-02 INR-07 L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02

SS-15 TRSE-00 EB-07 ACDA-05 FAA-00 DOTE-00 SCS-03

SR-02 ORM-01 COME-00 /112 W
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FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3918

CIA WASHDC IMMEDIATE

DIA WASHDC

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY ANKARA IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY ATHENS IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY CAIRO IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY LONDON IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY PARIS IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY ROME IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV IMMEDIATE

USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GER IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L BEIRUT 4916

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS LE PLO

SUBJECT: BEIRUT SITREP -1000Z

REF: BEIRUT 4894

1. BEIRUTIS BEGAN MORNING APRIL 17 TO VENTURE FORTH CAUTIOUSLY

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IN MOST AREAS OF CITY AS CEASEFIRE ARRANGED LATE APRIL 16 SEEMED

TO BE HOLDING GENERALLY. TRAFFIC ON SOME MAJOR ARTERIES INCREASED SIGNIFICANTLY. SOME SHOPS OPEN BUT MOST CLOSED. SHIAH AND AIN RAMMANEH DISTRICTS REPORTEDLY REMAIN QUITE TENSE AND OCCASIONAL DESULTORY AUTOMATIC WEAPONS FIRE CAN BE HEARD FROM PORT/QUARANTINA AREA THIS MORNING. WE ARE INFORMED THAT PHALANGE CLEARED LATTER DISTRICT OF PALESTINIAN RESISTANCE YESTERDAY WITH AID LOCAL ARMENIAN TASHNAQS BUT SOME TWO HUNDRED PALESTINIAN REINFORCEMENTS REPORTEDLY LANDED BY SEA THERE LAST NIGHT TO JOIN FORCES WITH NEIGHBORHOOD KURDS.

2. WITH BASIC SITUATION SOMEWHAT STABILIZED, BEIRUT-RUMOR MILL IS GRINDING OUT ITS PRODUCT WITH CHARACTERISTIC FERVOR. AMONG PALESTINIANS, WORD IS CIRCULATING THAT ISRAELI AND/OR JORDANIAN AGENTS ARE FIRING IN ATTEMPT DRAW PHALANGE AND PALESTINIANS BACK INTO FRAY. OTHERS ARE CLAIMING COMMUNIST AND LEFTIST AGENTS PROVOCATEUR ACTIVE. WE HAVE REPORT THAT COMMUNISTS AND/OR PHALANGE FIRED ON CAR IN QUARANTINA THIS MORNING, KILLING MEMBER SHAKAWI FAMILY AND WOUNDING BROTHER OF RASHID SHARAF-ADDIN, MUSLIM ALLY OF SAEB SALAM IN 1958 CIVIL WAR. LATEST REPORT WE HAVE RECEIVED HAS ARMED PARTISANS OF KAMAL JUMBLATT AND SALAM FIRING AT EACH OTHER IN BASTA/ CORNICHE MAZRA. PAPERS WHICH APPEARED TODAY IN ABBREVIATED FORM IMPLY "HIDDEN HAND" IN WEEK'S PROCEEDINGS BUT GENERALLY LEAVE READER TO FILL IN BLANKS THROUGH OPTIC OF HIS OWN PERSONAL PREJUDICES.

3. LEBANESE TV DURING ITS PROGRAMMING NIGHT APRIL 16 INTERRUPTED ON HALF-HOURLY BASIS TO READ IN ENTIRETY STATEMENTS BY PM SOLH, GEMAYAL, PROGRESSIVE PARTIES AND NATIONALIST FORCES, AND PLO CALLING FOR ADHERENTS TO LAY DOWN ARMS AND ABIDE BY CEASEFIRE. THIS INJUNCTION APPEARS TO HAVE BEEN OBEYED GENERALLY, ALTHOUGH PHALANGE AND PALESTINIANS HAVE ABANDONED STREET POSITIONS FOR MARSHALLING STATIONS. ANNOUNCEMENT OF CEASEFIRE AND MOVES BY POLICE AND SECURITY FORCES TO ENFORCE IT LAST EVENING WERE AIDED IMMEASURABLY BY UNSEASONAL AND PROVIDENTIAL RAIN SQUALL WHICH STRUCK CITY AT APPROX 1800Z. POLICE REPORTEDLY TO FORM JOINT PATROLS APRIL 17 WITH PHALANGISTS ON ONE HAND AND FEDAYEEN ON OTHER TO MONITOR COMPLIANCE. WE ALSO UNDERSTAND FEDAYEEN HAVE FORMED UP TO 45 PATROLS IN THEIR AREAS, INCLUDING REPRESENTATIVES OF QTE REJECTION FRONT UNQTE ORGANIZATIONS, WHO HAVE OFFICIALLY

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ANNOUNCED THEIR ACCEPTANCE OF CEASEFIRE. NEVERTHELESS, WE EXPECT DAY TO CONTINUE TENSE WITH SPORADIC INCIDENTS AS ALL PARTIES TEST THEIR ABILITY TO CONTROL SITUATION.

4. WE HAVE CONFIRMATION THAT RAYMOND EDDE AND IMAM MUSA SADR, IN COOPERATION WITH ARAB LEAGUE SYG, MAHMUD RIAD, PLAYED IMPORTANT ROLES IN COOLING TEMPER. THERE ARE CONFLICTING ACCOUNTS, BUT IT APPEARS THAT PRES FRANGIE PERSONALLY FAVORED

CALLING OUT ARMY YESTERDAY, BUT HESITATED FOR FEAR PM SOLH WOULD RESIGN AND CREATE CABINETCRISIS AT THIS DELICATE MOMENT. ARMY POSED TWO CONDITIONS FOR ITS INTERFERENCE: A) PROCLAMATION OF MARTIAL LAW, AND B) COMMANDER WOULD MAKE DECISIONS WITHOUT INTERFERENCE FROM ANY SOURCE. SOLH APPARENTLY WOULD NOT ACCEPT THESE CONDITIONS, AND MATTER WAS DROPPED.

5. ACCORDING WELL PLACED ARMY SOURCE, TWO SIDES HAD REACHED APPROXIMATE EQUILIBRIUM PRIOR TO CEASEFIRE. ARMY SOURCE ESTIMATES THREE TO FOUR THOUSAND ENGAGED ON EACH SIDE (PRIMARILY QTE REJECTION FRONT UNQTE AND HANGERS ON FOR PALESTINIANS). SAIQA, SUPPORTED BY SYRIA, REMAINED COMPLETELY OUT OF FIGHTING AND FATAH WAS ONLY MARGINALLY INVOLVED. LEBANESE ARMY ESTIMATES PALESTINIANS ALONE LOST 213 RPT 213 KILLED, BUT THIS FIGURE MIGHT BE BIT HIGH. WE ESTIMATE, HOWEVER, THAT NOT LESS THAN 150 DEAD TOTAL BOTH SIDES.

6. ALL AMCITS CONTINUE SAFE, BUT WE ADVISING ALL INQUIRERS TO CONTINUE RESTRICT MOVEMENTS AROUND CITY TO ABSOLUTE MINIMUM NECESSARY. AIRPORT OPERATING. IT IS UNCERTAIN THAT JET FUEL WILL BE TRUCKED IN TODAY. ROAD TO BEIRUT FROM TRIPOLI CUT IN SEVERAL PLACES BUT ROAD TO SIDON APPEARS OPEN. FORTY PERCENT EMBASSY LOCAL EMPLOYEES REPORTED FOR WORK THIS MORNING AND KENNEDY CENTER AND USIS REGIONAL SERVICE CENTER OPEN.
GODLEY

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